



INSTITUTE *for*  
PRIESTLY FORMATION

Fall 2020

# *Hearts on Fire*

## *Magazine*



## Summer 2020 at IPF

Virtual Reality became real this summer—A new blend of in-person and online connection with faculty, friends, honorees, and a new program. See what happened this summer on pg 4.



INSTITUTE *for*  
PRIESTLY FORMATION

A Public Association of the Faithful  
in the Archdiocese of Omaha

2500 California Plaza  
Omaha, NE 68178-0415  
402-546-6384  
[www.priestlyformation.org](http://www.priestlyformation.org)

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## Our Mission

In collaboration with Catholic seminaries and dioceses, we form seminarians, priests, and bishops in holiness and accompany them in their ongoing spiritual growth, so they can more effectively lead others to Christ.

## Our Vision

We envision a joyful and powerful renewal of holiness across the U.S. Catholic Church as more diocesan seminarians, priests, and bishops seek and commit to a personal, deep, and sustained spiritual communion with the Trinity.

## Our Objectives

1. Live out our beliefs and convictions in everything we do with humility and magnanimity, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, knowing we are nothing without God.
2. Stay focused on why we exist: to serve the spiritual formation needs of diocesan seminarians, priests, bishops, and those involved in priestly formation.
3. Ensure the ongoing excellence of our programs, retreats, publications, and activities by proactively seeking input and information from others.
4. Sustain and grow funding to ensure that IPF continues its mission for generations to come.



# From the IPF Executive Director:

## Dear Friends,

Speaking with priests from across the country recently, one alumnus mentioned that IPF helped fill a hunger in him to be in deeper relationship with God. As the new Executive Director I am glad to hear this - that IPF can serve the spiritual lives of priests. Even more deeply, this is a basic human hunger - to be in relationship with God.

Relationship is something I noticed I hungered for in the months of March and April and May when many events were cancelled, and travel curtailed due to Covid-19. In-person meetings gave way to video meetings, and large gatherings were postponed. I noticed my friends became more important to stay in contact with. My family became more important. Parishioners became more important. Jesus became more important. It was an unexpected grace, to again see the primacy of relationship.

The framework of Relationship, Identity, Mission is a spiritual grounding that is central to our existence at IPF. Relationship with God is primary, from which I understand who I am (my identity is rooted God) from there I see more clearly who I am asked to serve in my vocation (mission).

At our weekly IPF staff meetings in the Spring we gathered each week via video conference. A question arose as cancellations of some of our programs loomed - How does God want us to enter into this time? The cancellation of our summer programs this year left a big window of time on our hands at IPF. Collectively, it was a time of prayer, conversation, and asking God how might IPF best serve the Church in priestly formation going forward. It was a deliberate return to relationships; to our supporters, our friends, and God. In this issue, you will read about the fruits of the summer, new programs, and the stories of long-time friends who have gone to the Lord this year.

Finally, you will notice that we refreshed our normal newsletter to a magazine style for easier reading. Along with this is a refreshed logo, which you can read about on page 11. The title of the magazine, Hearts of Fire, comes from our tagline at IPF, "Hearts on Fire for Christ", which is our desired outcome for all involved with IPF.

Let us keep each other in prayer. Count on mine for you,

## Sincerely in the Lord,



Fr. Brian Welter,  
Executive Director of IPF



## Inside this Issue

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# Summer at IPF in 2020

The Fruits of a Summer: Growing in Relationship with God



## Vision 2025

We want to make sure IPF continues to prepare priests to shepherd others to Christ in a renewal of holiness across the Church. Since January, we have been blessed with a strategic plan: "Vision 2025", which was the effort of two years of work with supporters and the staff of IPF. Check our website to see how we are planning for the next five years ([priestlyformation.org](http://priestlyformation.org)).

Part of our "Vision 2025" strategic plan is to expand programs, and consult, especially, on how our summer seminarian program fits in the overall structure of priestly formation.



## Summer Consultations

Due to Covid-19, we cancelled the summer seminarian program - the first time in 26 years we did not host the program. We used the extra time this summer for consultations, via video conference, on how IPF might better serve the "itinerary", or path, of priestly formation that the Church proposed in the 2016 document *The Gift of Priestly Formation*.

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*The summer program fills an important transition stage when a seminarian moves from the discipleship stage to the configuration to Christ stage.*

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One consultation, with long-time friends who are involved in priestly formation work, produced a proposal that IPF offer a symposium to help articulate the common spiritual thread found in *The Gift of Priestly Formation* — from the stage of initial discernment of a man entering the seminary through his ongoing formation as a priest. The consultation helped us see that the summer program fills an



important transition stage when a seminarian moves from the discipleship stage to the configuration to Christ stage. Another proposal was to serve the spiritual needs of priests in the 5-10 year-ordained cohort. *The Gift of Priestly Formation* denotes this as part of the ongoing formation stage of priesthood.

A second consultation with a group of bishops asked how IPF might best serve the spiritual lives of bishops. We propose to offer a program for bishops beginning in Fall 2021. There would be 2 modules each year; a module on teachings on the spiritual life, and then an 8-day silent directed retreat. Serving the spiritual lives of bishops has been on the heart of IPF since our founding.

## Friends Night

Our annual "Friends Night" that occurs in the heart of the summer program usually brings together the seminarians, spiritual moms, and other friends of IPF on the campus of Creighton University. This was moved to a virtual format. It allowed for many of our friends from across the U.S to join us for Mass, Adoration and Benediction, and some time for reflection. We livestreamed the event from a local Omaha parish.



## Spiritual Direction Training Program

A new cohort of the Spiritual Direction Training Program for priests was to begin in Spring 2020. We delayed the start of the cohort until Spring 2021. The program is on a three-year cycle, with three modules each year (Spring, Fall, Winter). The Fall module is a silent-directed retreat. We host the program at Mundelein Seminary, and look forward to starting next Spring, and have 151 participants enrolled.

# IPF's Advent Morning of Reflection

## What's Happening with the Event in December

December 12th has been set as the date for this year's Advent Morning of Reflection. Although the format will be somewhat modified, we will continue this tradition of gathering to pray in the midst of our Advent journey. We will have both an in-person gathering and will also welcome others through a live-stream connection.

For those able to join us in person, we will gather at 10 a.m. in St. Vincent de Paul Church, Omaha. We will begin with Mass, with Fr. Jim Rafferty as the main celebrant and homilist. Following Mass, IPF's new Executive Director, Fr. Brian Welter, will offer an Advent reflection. As usual, we will provide a special Advent image and suggestions for prayer.

Friends who cannot be with us in person are invited to join us via live-stream. Links will be available on the IPF website and IPF Facebook page.



# Saint John Paul II Virtual Event

## Genuine Appreciation for Our Priests



This has been a year like no other in recent history. Through it all, our priests have been reminding us of God's unconditional love for each of us. They have been tackling technology to bring Mass into living rooms during the shutdown and braving infection as they share the sacraments with their parishioners.

These acts of accompanying us and assisting in deepening our relationship with God are not unique in these times, but they are balm to our souls.

It's only fitting that so many of you have joined in expressing your appreciation to priests who have positively impacted your lives by making donations to the St. John Paul II Fund for Priests.

Nine priests have received the Institute's St. John Paul II Medallion since last year because the account in their name reached the minimum perpetual level of \$5,000. They are Fr. James Brown, OAR, Msgr. Albert Davidsaver, Fr. Michael Eckley, Msgr. Thomas Furlong, Fr. Larry Gillick, SJ, Fr. Lloyd Gnirk, Fr. Dennis Hanneman, Bishop David Toups, and Fr. Damien Wee.

They were recognized at the St. John Paul II Fund for Priests Annual Mass and Program – but the program, like so many other events this year, was virtual. People from across the country joined us for

the medallion presentation program on Thursday, Oct. 22. The video of the event is still available to watch at [www.priestlyformation.org](http://www.priestlyformation.org). Mass was celebrated by IPF priest leadership for all perpetual priests and their donors prior to the program.

Individuals, parishes, and other organizations have worked with the Institute to create an effort that funds their particular priest's account. Group efforts are easy.

People, this year especially, have genuinely appreciated being offered the opportunity to show their gratitude for their priest's vocation. Every contribution also supports the Institute's mission of working in collaboration with Catholic seminaries and dioceses to form bishops, priests, and seminarians in holiness and accompany them in their ongoing spiritual growth so they can more effectively lead others to Christ.

While donations help build a stronger Church, this gesture of honoring priests has a buoying effect on our priests today.

After a recent medallion presentation, the recipient priest said, "I do not need this medallion as a priest. And yet, receiving it has touched me in such a deep way. I think everyone appreciates being appreciated."

Everyone does.

For more information or to make a donation to a particular priest's St. John Paul II Fund, email [elizabethwells@creighton.edu](mailto:elizabethwells@creighton.edu) for details.







Priests receiving their Saint John Paul II Medallion from the top left: Fr. Lloyd Gnirk, Fr. Dennis Hanneman, Greg and Mary Lynn Schweitz receiving on behalf of Fr. James Brown, OAR, Msgr. Thomas Furlong, Virginia Davidsaver and Angie Wells receiving on behalf of Msgr. Albert Davidsaver, Fr. Michael Eckley, Fr. Larry Gillick, SJ, and Bishop David Toups (on opposite page, Fr. Damien Wee).





## From the President of the IPF Foundation



I began my work with IPF on March 1, 2020. Never have I begun a new position and after two weeks, had a pandemic shut down our country and countries around the world. I never would have predicted we would still be working from home eight months later. Like everything else in this pandemic, non-profit fundraising has been turned upside down. Ways we had always done things are no longer the same or even possible.

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*There is excitement in all that has been accomplished and I believe we have a renewed vision for IPF's future.*

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That said, important building blocks and strides have been accomplished in the IPF Foundation since my arrival in March. Relationships have never been so important: with God, family, friends, and my new colleagues of IPF. What these restricted times has allowed us is a chance to reflect, make major adjustments, and implement important aspects of the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan as it applies to the mission of the IPF Foundation and IPF Programs.



Larry Dwyer, Executive Director of the IPF Foundation Board speaking at a past IPF event

A new legal agreement between the IPF Foundation and the Institute will update the specifics of the two separate entities and how they will work in cooperation to further the IPF Mission. Larry Dwyer, attorney for IPF, along with IPF leadership has worked tirelessly towards this goal. Larry is a wonderful friend of IPF, and we cannot thank him enough.

Funds within the Foundation are being clearly defined and named according to their specific purpose. Some of the funds will be endowed, others will be purpose restricted depending on the donor's request. Donors have been incredibly faithful to the Institute during its 26-year history and it is imperative that IPF honor their generosity using their donated funds according to their requests. This will provide all donors more options as to how they would like their gifts designated.

Along with the rest of the country, IPF is looking forward to being able to offer our programs and events in person, but in the meantime, we are planning more virtual events. The St. John Paul II Fund for Priests Program was one such virtual event this year. Fortunately, we were still able to celebrate the priests whose accounts reached the perpetual level during the past year and to invite their donors to participate as well. The Lenten Morning of Reflection was cancelled due to the pandemic; however, the Advent Morning of Reflection is being planned as a virtual opportunity for prayer and reflection during this upcoming holy time of year. These retreat-like events give laity an important taste of the spirituality offered to the clergy who participate in IPF programs strengthening their personal relationship with God.

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*Donors have been incredibly faithful to the Institute during its 26-year history and it is imperative that IPF honor their generosity.*

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During this time of quarantining, the Foundation led the way in search of a marketing firm to collaborate with IPF staff for a fresh brand as outlined in Vision





From left to right, Fr. Brian Welter, Mary Buttell, Msgr. Thomas Furlong, and Fr. Richard Gabuzda. Msgr. Furlong was presented with a Saint John Paul II medallion earlier this year.

2025. EG Integrated was tasked with the goal of creating an innovative brand that reflects the core values of IPF and meets the needs of our many audiences. Additionally, the process included refreshing the website, building a branding kit, and consultation and mentoring for IPF communication staff.

Updated materials will be used to introduce people to IPF as well as to strengthen our relationships with both clergy and laity across the globe.

This is certainly not the start I had planned when I came to IPF, but there is God's wisdom and grace in all things. There is excitement in all that has been accomplished and a renewed vision for IPF's future. We are sincerely grateful for your support. I look forward to getting to know you better and, hopefully soon, thanking you personally.

Mary Buttell,  
President of the IPF Foundation

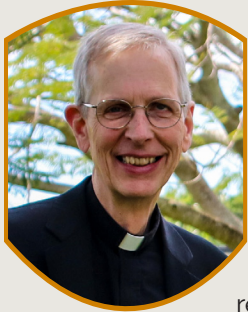
# Please Remember IPF in Your End of the Year Giving

The Institute for Priestly Formation welcomes and appreciates your spiritual and financial support. During these challenging times, many traditional ways of securing donations have not been available during this pandemic.

We understand giving to a charitable organization is a very personal and prayerful decision. Please consider remembering IPF in your end of the year giving. The Institute for Priestly Formation and the Institute for Priestly Formation Foundation are both 501 (c) (3) tax exempt entities. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by the law.

There are many opportunities to give to the IPF Annual Fund or the IPF Foundation. Please contact Mary Buttell at 402-280-2309 or by email at [marybuttell@creighton.edu](mailto:marybuttell@creighton.edu) for more information on ways to give.

## Fr. Rich's New Role: Refocusing on the Mission



As Fr. Brian Welter settles into his new role as Executive Director of the Institute, Fr. Rich Gabuzda has

remained on the IPF staff as Director of Programming and Mission. So, what is he doing these days??

In recent months, Fr. Gabuzda has been spending a good amount of time helping to transition Fr. Welter into his new role. Fr. Welter has been well briefed on the strategic planning process conducted last year which has led to the creation of Vision 2025, a five-year plan for IPF's growth. Fr. Gabuzda has been helpful in providing background information about the extensive process that led to the Vision document.

As mentioned previously, the staff has been planning a new program for bishops. Fr. Gabuzda has been working on this project, including writing a grant to help start the program. In addition, he has also been working on grants for next summer's seminarian program.

In his spare time, with the help of Andrea from our office staff, he is going through 25 years' worth of files, creating a mainly electronic archive of saved files. Who knows, maybe the journey through old files will produce a chapter or two more of IPF history?

# VISION 2025

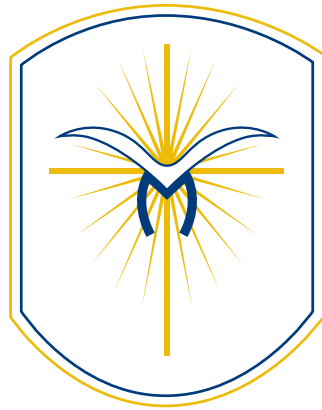
Vision 2025, the fruit of a year long strategic planning process, provides the way forward for the next five years of the IPF mission. The Beliefs and Convictions, along with our Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Objectives (cf. page 2), will guide us in implementing the Vision.

## Our Beliefs and Convictions

1. We believe all people can enter into a personal, intimate relationship with the Trinity.
2. We believe we are in a unique period in human and Church history in which the faithful are in need of more healthy and holy priests and bishops, who can only live in authentic holiness through prayer and deep, sustained spiritual relationship with the Trinity.
3. We believe in the importance of fidelity to the whole of Catholic teaching.
4. We believe priests are expected to be experts in the spiritual life and that through their ministry, the faithful can be assisted to draw closer to the living God.
5. We believe every priest should always feel that he is a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ.
6. We believe priests who are in deep interior friendship with Christ more effectively live out pastoral charity through ministry to the People of God.
7. We believe that individual accompaniment is essential to the journey to growth in holiness.
8. We believe relationship with Jesus Christ is the integrating and unifying core of all aspects of priestly formation.
9. We believe priestly celibacy is a gift from Christ that, when lived as a way of love, is spiritual life-giving.
10. We believe the spiritual teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola can assist all men and women of faith to encounter Christ. We believe these spiritual gifts, while not exclusively so, are particularly well-suited for the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians, priests, or those involved in priestly formation.
11. We believe Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, is our "mother and fountain of life." We gratefully invoke her untiring intercession for our mission, together with Saint Joseph, "Father of the Interior Life."



# A Reinvigorated Brand Reveals the Heart of IPF



## INSTITUTE *for* PRIESTLY FORMATION

*Hearts on Fire for Christ*

The IPF logo is made up of several elements, each representing a unique grace that ties into the heart of IPF's mission. Foundational to our prayer life as Catholics is deepening our relationship with each person of the Trinity and honoring Mary. At the heart of IPF is the accompaniment of seminarians, priests and bishops as they grow in understanding how to pray to each person of the Trinity and Mary.

IPF's new tagline, "Hearts on Fire for Christ" reflects what we hope our mission will achieve in the Church. The new title of the IPF magazine, "Hearts on Fire," was chosen to highlight the tagline.

### **The Blue "M"**

Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, teaches that the most fruitful activity of the human person is to be able to receive God.

### **The Shield**

The shield represents academics, as well as protection. In Ephesians 6: 10-18, we are called to put on the full armor of God and take up the shield of faith.

### **The Dove, Gold Cross and Beams**

In her Annunciation, Mary's active receptivity of the Holy Spirit permits Jesus and His saving activity to enter the world, expressed especially in his cross, which radiates the glory of the Father. By way of her "yes," Divine Love became incarnate in time. Now, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, all have access to the intimate love of the Trinity.

# POSJ

## The IPF Priests of St. Joseph

### IPF Priests of St. Joseph Continues to Grow

October 22, 2020 will mark the fifth anniversary of the granting of the statutes to the IPF Priests of St. Joseph. On that day five years ago, the feast of St. John Paul II, Archbishop Lucas officially granted recognition of the IPF Priests of St. Joseph as a Clerical Public Association.

The Association draws together diocesan priests who profess vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, as well as an additional vow to care for the spiritual life of fellow diocesan priests. The Association consists of internal and external members.

Internal members live in Omaha and work full time with the mission of IPF. At present, Fr. Rich Gabuzda and Fr. Jim Rafferty serve in that capacity. External members live in their own dioceses and assist with IPF programs as possible. As of this summer, there are five external members: Fr. Josh Brown, Diocese

of Grand Island; Fr. Nicholas Cachia, Archdiocese of Malta; Fr. Rob Cadrecha, Diocese of St. Petersburg; Fr. Jorge Garcia, Diocese of San Bernardino; Fr. Andrew Gehringer, Diocese of Allentown.

Fr. Jeff Eirvin, vocation director for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, was accepted as a candidate this past May. Fr. Eirvin, who also serves as President of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, will engage in a two-year formation program.

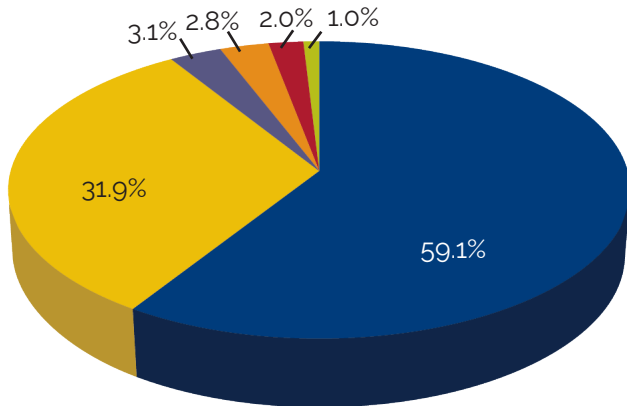
Usually, external members come to Omaha during our summer programs, providing the time when the Association celebrates the profession of or renewal of vows. Since this was not possible due to the cancellation of summer programs, we "met" this summer via Zoom and were able to share with each other that important time of prayer and conversation.

Here's a screen shot of the Zoom gathering, held on July 1, 2020. The gathering brought priests together from three time zones and six different states! During prayer, Fr. Cachia and Fr. Gehringer professed third temporary vows, Fr. Cadrecha professed second temporary vows, and Fr. Brown and Fr. Garcia professed first temporary vows. Kathy Kanavy joined the POSJ for the occasion as did Fr. Brian Welter.



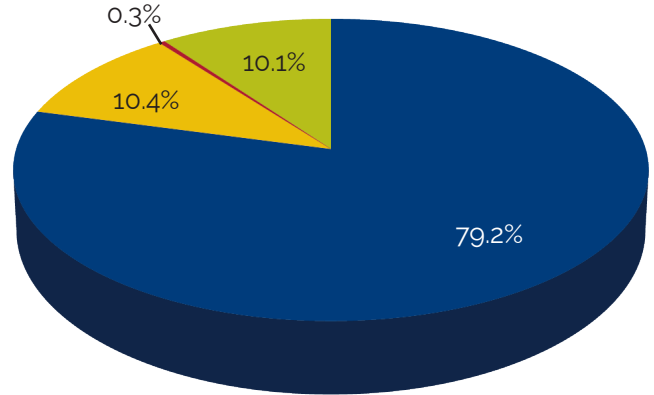


## 2019 Revenues



Program Fees, Tuition, Room & Board	\$2,073,311
Contributions & Special Events	\$1,119,539
Grants	\$110,000
Saint John Paul II Fund	\$100,000
Other Auxiliary Income	\$71,445
Investment Income	\$35,986
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,510,281</b>

## 2019 Expenses



Program Expenses	\$2,708,108
Fundraising	\$354,631
Support to IPF Foundation	\$10,702
General and Administrative	\$346,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,419,941</b>

## With Grateful Hearts on Fire for Christ

IPF wishes to gratefully thank our supporters who so generously gave of their financial resources during 2019. Last year's financial summary, confirmed by our annual audit performed this summer, is reflected above. Our 25th year was one to remember, both in appreciation of all that God has done in and through the Institute, but also as one that confirmed the vital support of the Church and the laity. Without this

essential support, IPF would not be able to provide programs to serve the spiritual formation needs of diocesan seminarians, priests, bishops, and those involved in priestly formation, so that they, in turn, can more effectively lead others to Christ. May God richly reward your faith in the Institute for Priestly Formation and your generosity to its mission.

## Priest as Prophet: Priestly Participation in the Prophetic Ministry of Jesus

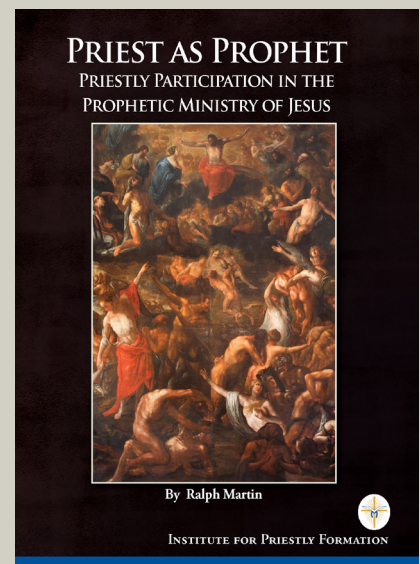
By Dr. Ralph Martin

The priest's sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly ministry of Jesus is well known, but more attention needs to be paid to the full meaning of Jesus' prophetic ministry in order to respond effectively to the challenges the Church is facing today, both in its engagement with the culture and in the challenges of internal purification.

Order online at [www.ipfpublications.org](http://www.ipfpublications.org)

ISBN #: 9781734283129

Cost: \$5.00



# Marking the Passing of Good Friends

## Remembering Dedicated Supporters of IPF

Within the last year, three good friends and dedicated supporters of the IPF mission were welcomed into eternity by the Lord.

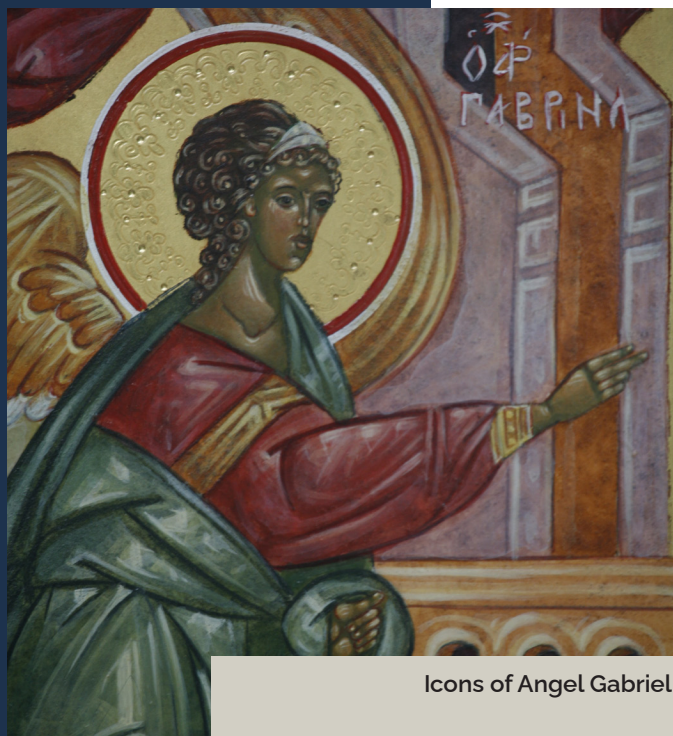
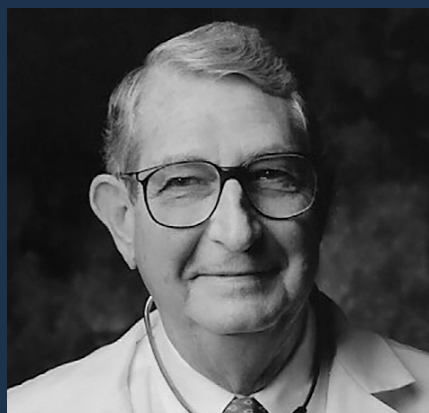
### Dr. Perry Williams

Dr. Perry Williams, who died November 15, 2019, served together with his late wife, Donna, on IPF's initial Mission Advancement Council beginning in 2002. They contributed generously to the IPF mission over the years in a variety of ways.

Though we have many memories of Perry and Donna, a lasting memorial to their generous support was left to IPF in the form of three icons Perry commissioned specifically for IPF. The first was a unique version of Our Lady of Guadalupe (our patroness), the second, an icon depicting the four evangelists, and the third, an image of Jesus. Perry's penchant for detail made sure that the icons were "just right" for what he wanted.

In 2013, he and Donna were presented with IPF's Our Lady of Guadalupe Award, honoring their faith, service, and their devotion to the IPF mission.

May he and Donna rest in the peace of the Lord whom they loved and served so faithfully.



Icons of Angel Gabriel and Mary at the Annunciation written by Jane Tancredi and commissioned by Dr. Perry and Donna Williams



## Mr. James Taphorn

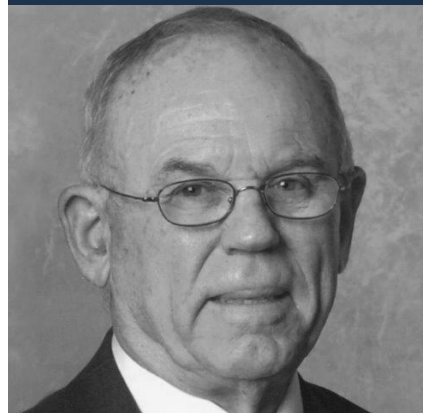
Jim also became a founding member of the Mission Advancement Council in 2002.

From then on, he remained a stalwart supporter of all things IPF. That support continued until Jim's death on August 18th of this year.

When the Mission Advancement Council developed plans for an annual Celebration of Priesthood banquet, Jim jumped right in. Members fondly remember his capable organizational talent which accomplished invitation addressing and table seating arrangements with a speed and ease that amazed us all.

Jim and wife Joan were generous benefactors throughout all these years, joining with others to provide IPF with resources to grow in ever greater service to seminarians and priests. In light of that service, they were awarded the Our Lady of Guadalupe Award in 2010.

To his wife, Joan, and their family we offer the assurance of our prayers. We are not sure how much rest Jim will have in eternity, but it will be full of the Lord's love and joy for sure!



## Anna Lou Micek

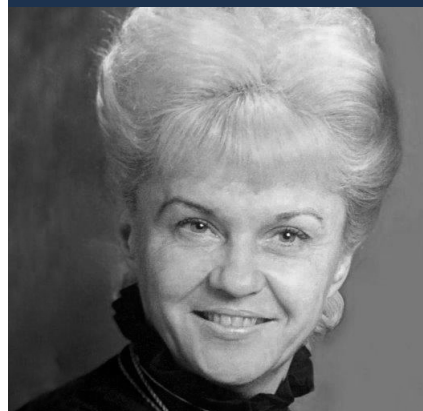
IPF commended another good friend into the hands of the Lord on August 22, 2020. Anna Lou Micek, together with her dear husband John, have been helping to promote the IPF mission since 2002.

Over the course of many years, Anna Lou and John supported numerous Catholic institutions and projects. The building up of the Catholic faith was the great desire that remained at the heart of their support.

Led by their great devotion to Eucharistic Adoration, they saw in IPF's mission a means the Lord established to help deepen the spiritual lives of seminarians and priests. They particularly enjoyed coming to Adoration with the seminarians in the summer and attending various other IPF activities.

They were Our Lady of Guadalupe Award recipients in 2008 in recognition of their great support of and generosity to the IPF mission.

We offer our prayers and sympathy to John and his family. May the Lord receive Anna Lou into the fullness of His love and Divine Mercy.



## Support IPF With Your Gifts

Want to provide opportunities for spiritual growth for diocesan priests and seminarians through the work of IPF? Contact Mary Buttell, President of the IPF Foundation, at [marybuttell@creighton.edu](mailto:marybuttell@creighton.edu), to learn more about the different ways your gifts can be used to support the programs and mission of IPF.



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# Calendar of Upcoming Events

- ▶ October 29, 2020  
**Mission Advisory Council Meeting**
- ▶ November 2 - 9, 2020  
**Alumni Retreat**  
Cenacle of Divine Providence,  
Clearwater, FL
- ▶ November 14, 2020  
**Bishops Advisory Council Meeting**
- ▶ December 12, 2020  
**Advent Morning of Reflection**  
Online and at  
St. Vincent de Paul, Omaha, NE
- ▶ Dec 28, 2020 - Jan 3 (6), 2021  
**Pre-Ordination Retreat**  
Pax Christi Retreat Center,  
Corpus Christi, Texas
- ▶ January 24 - 29 (Feb. 1), 2021  
**NCDVD Annual Retreat**  
Virtual Retreat
- ▶ February 22 - March 1, 2021  
**Alumni Retreat**  
Cenacle of Divine Providence,  
Clearwater, FL